

Dr Charles Keale  
(Deothbed)

DRAWER 13A

Personal files



# The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Dr. Charles Leale

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

## Tells of Murder

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (United Press).

—The night of April 14, 1865, a youthful physician went to Ford's Theater in Washington to see the performance of "My American Cousin," because he knew President Lincoln would be there. Memories of that night proved harrowing today, even after sixty-three years, to Dr. Charles A. Leale of New York, now eighty-six years old.

Dr. Leale, the only physician commissioned by Mrs. Lincoln to attend the President after he was mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth, and the only person living that witnessed Lincoln's death, was extremely reluctant to speak of the tragedy.

At the theater Dr. Leale could see the President, his bearded face wreathed in a pleasant smile as he chatted with Mrs. Lincoln and others in the box reserved for the Chief Executive.

Suddenly a shot rang out. Dr. Leale saw a wisp of smoke over the Presidential box. He hurried to the horror-stricken Mrs. Lincoln.

"I am Dr. Leale of the Army Square

Hospital," he said to her, and bent over the form of the President, who seemingly lifeless, still sat in his chair.

Dr. Leale called to one of a group of soldiers, who by then filled the box, and they placed the Chief Executive in a recumbent position on the floor. This helped relieve the pressure of a blood clot on the brain, the physician explained, and prolonged the President's life. Then, carefully, the form of the Great Emancipator was carried to Mr. Petersen's house across the street.

The still unconscious President was placed in a bed and Dr. Leale turned to Mrs. Lincoln. She indicated she wanted him to take charge of her wounded husband. But he knew there was nothing he could do.

Then, Dr. Leale said, he held the President's wrist and felt the throb of the pulse grow feeble gradually until it dimmed away to oblivion.

There the interview terminated. Dr. Leale was in no mood to discuss the experience further.

forces in all history have been more strangely identified in their careers. By all the dictates of convention all the advantage in the contest should have been with Douglas. When he first looked out upon the world from a neat cottage in Vermont, Lincoln was tottling about a sordid cabin in a Kentucky clearing. The father of one was an educated and successful physician; that of the other the most tragic of all failures, an unsuccessful illiterate ne'er-do-well. Douglas had the background of success; Lincoln of failure."

12, 1909.

## CARED FOR LINCOLN DYING

### DR. LEALE OF THIS CITY WITH HIM IN HIS LAST HOURS.

Answered a Call for a Physician That Was Sent Through the Theatre After the Shooting—He and Robert Todd Lincoln Alone Survive That Scene.

There are two men living who were at the bedside of Abraham Lincoln when he died. One is his eldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln of Chicago, who is now the president of the Pullman company. The other is Dr. Charles A. Leale of 604 Madison avenue, New York.

Dr. Leale was the first surgeon to reach the stricken President on the night of his assassination in Ford's Theatre, Washington, and he stayed by him throughout the nine hours that intervened between the moment that John Wilkes Booth fired his shot and the time of Mr. Lincoln's death. Dr. Leale, who at the time was the executive officer in the United States Army General Hospital at Washington, was fresh from his studies at the Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York and was scarcely 23 years old.

He was an eyewitness to the tragedy from the moment that Mr. Lincoln entered his box at the performance of "Our American Cousin." He had gone there in the hope that he might see the President and therefore secured a seat somewhat less than forty feet from the box which the Presidential party occupied.

He heard the smothered altercation between the usher and Booth when the assassin was endeavoring to gain access to the box, was reassured by the silence that followed it and was appalled at the sound of gunfire. He saw Booth make his leap to the stage, watched him as his foot fouled in the bunting and then saw him vanish behind the scenes.

The call for a surgeon brought young Leale to his senses. He made his way against the tide that was setting toward the exits and reached in a moment or two the door leading to the President's box. He found it barred. John Wilkes Booth had fastened it from the inside in order to close one of the avenues of pursuit. In a moment it was opened to Leale, and he made his way to where Mr. Lincoln was sitting. He thought him dead. His eyes were closed and his head had fallen forward upon his chest.

Dr. Leale at once felt his pulse, but was able to distinguish no action. In order the better to make his examination he stretched the form of the President upon the floor of the box. At first he was under the impression that Booth had done his work with a dagger, and ordered his clothing cut away from shoulder to elbow on the left side. He found no injury. Then he raised the eyelids of Mr. Lincoln and perceived evidence of brain injury. Examination showed that Booth's shot had entered the back part of the President's head, behind the left ear. He re-

moved the obstructing clot of blood and thereby relieved the pressure upon the brain.

Dr. Leale did what he could at the moment, but he perceived that there was no hope. "His wound is mortal," said he; "it is impossible for him to recover." And that was the verdict which went to every corner of the country.

It was Dr. Leale who directed that Mr. Lincoln be taken to the nearest place where proper care could be given him. He refused to permit his removal to the White House, and had him carried to a dwelling almost across the way from the theatre. Dr. Leale was the surgeon in constant attendance thereafter, and his treatment was not modified throughout the whole nine hours that elapsed before the President's death.

The young Army surgeon kept the hand of the President in his through the night. At last, as the dawn was breaking, he perceived that death was not far distant. Yet he maintained his grasp of Mr. Lincoln's hand in order, as he says, that the great President might realize, in case he recovered consciousness, that he was in touch with humanity.

Dr. Leale has knowledge that he preserved Mr. Lincoln's life for the space of nine hours, during which his son, Robert Lincoln, was able to see his father alive. He looks upon the occurrences of those days as history so sacred as to preclude commonplace narration. He does not like to talk about them or have them talked about.



# Dressed Wounds of the Martyred Lincoln

New York Physician, First to Reach the Side of the President After He Was Shot, Is Last Survivor of Those Who Played Parts in the Tragic Drama

*Journal 2-3-30*

**T**IME'S inexorable curtain falls upon the witnesses and participants in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. And, as it falls, the unclosable gaps in the tragic incident seem destined to remain forever unexplained. Today, 65 years after Booth's shot turned the quiet, calm performance of "Our American Cousin" into pandemonium, there apparently remains but one living person who participated in the event and its aftermath. Strangely enough, the last man alive who moved through that bewildering, history making night was the first one to reach the side of the martyred president from beyond the box.

He is Dr. Charles Augustus Leale of New York, the story of whose connection with the event is known to but few. A youth just out of medical school, Dr. Leale took charge of the case and remained in charge of it until the president passed. It was he whose prognosis was pronounced correct to the last degree and to whom goes the credit for keeping the president alive for nine

of the gravest hours of America's history.

Virtually his first case, it was his most important. And so indelibly did those nine hours leave their impress on the life of the young doctor that his one thought throughout the subsequent 65 years has been to forget.

Just recently in Toledo, Ohio, the Rev. Jackson C. Taylor, a former slave who was in Ford's theater the night Lincoln was shot, was killed by an automobile. Shortly before that, William J. Ferguson, the last survivor of the troupe of actors whose performance the president was witnessing, passed on. His death was preceded only a couple of years by that of a more prominent member of the company, Mrs. Jennie Gourlay Struthers, who, as Jennie Gourlay, was second to the leading lady, Laura Keane, in the cast.

The printed program of the tragedy marked performance contained a notice that on the following Saturday night a presentation of "The Octoroon" would be given for the benefit of Miss Gourlay who was to play the lead. That performance never occurred. When the curtain was rung down after Booth's shot Ford's ceased to be a playhouse. Today only the original structure's front wall stands. The government owns the property and before long it probably will be turned into a

museum. A bill provided for this now pends in congress.

"IF MRS. STRUTHERS is gone — I thought she was still living — Dr. Leale is probably the only living person who, insofar as I know, was directly connected with the incidents immediately related to the assassination and its aftermath," says Col. O. H. Oldroyd, who created and still directs the Lincoln museum in Washington, now owned by the government, in the house, across the street from the old theater, in which Lincoln died.

"There may be, probably are, still living a few persons who were in the audience that night and perhaps a few who witnessed aftermath incidents of the assassination, such as the removal of the president to this house. But I know positively of none, although a member of the Garrett family, in whose barn in Virginia Booth was captured, was still living a few years ago.

"Even the long procession of men who said they helped carry Mr. Lincoln from the theater seems to have ended.

We haven't heard in several years of a living claimant to that distinction. It has never been established positively who did perform that service, though I had it from a reliable witness that at least six men shared in it.

"No one who was around the theater that night ever drops in here now as many of them used to do," said Col. Oldroyd as he sat among his beloved Lincoln relics, to the collecting and caring for which he has given most of a long life. A few feet away was the small hall bedroom in which the immortal Lincoln breathed his last early in the morning following the attack on him in the theater.

DR. LEALE was present at that scene. So was Robert Lincoln, the president's son, who died only a few

years ago. The two were long the only survivors of the group in the death chamber that night. And, curiously, they never met again after the body of Lincoln was taken from Washington and, insofar as is known, neither of them ever revisited the place. Robert



*Dr. Charles Augustus Leale, from an old print*

Lincoln was not in the theater when his father was shot.



Dr. Leale was not only a witness to the assassination but also was the first physician to reach the wounded man. It was he who diagnosed the wound, administered first aid treatment and determined on the medical procedure

that was followed to the end. Beyond a brief memoir which he read to a medical society a quarter of a century ago and deposited in several libraries he never has discussed publicly his experiences of that night. In fact so silent has he been that many persons who have known him since have been unaware of his part in the events following Booth's assault.

"I have tried to avoid anything that tended to make vivid to me again the experiences of that night," Dr. Leale once told the writer.

Those experiences came to him mostly by accident. He was newly out of medical school with a commission in the medical corps of the Union army and was on duty at the general military hospital in Washington. Being off duty that night, he went to the theater where he sat far back on the first floor. He heard the shot fired by the assassin and saw Booth jump from the box and fall upon the stage as one of the spurs the actor wore caught in the flag which draped the box. He heard someone in the box or on the stage ask in a loud voice if a physician was in the audience. Then he knew someone, but he had no notion who, had been injured. Much of an athlete, he leaped over rows of seats, fought his way through the panicky crowd and got to the box only a moment or two after the attack.

He was the first person to reach the president from beyond the box. In his memoir he says he examined the wound and was convinced it was mortal. His prognosis, he says, was confirmed by other physicians who came later. Two of them, Dr. Charles S. Taft and Dr. Albert F. King, reached the box from the audience. It was suggested that the president be removed at once to the White House. Dr. Leale says he advised that the presi-

dent probably would not survive the jostling over the cobblestone pavements. Thus it probably is due to the thought of a man still living that the great Lincoln was taken to a rooming house across the street, where he died, as he had been reared, in an humble environment.

The other physicians agreed with the young doctor that it would be useless to attempt to remove the bullet from Lincoln's brain. Only ameliorating measures were used, says Dr. Leale. The opening made by the bullet was kept clear of blood clots to reduce the pressure on the brain, respiration was stimulated artificially and small doses of brandy were given internally.

THE three emergency physicians were joined at the rooming house by the Lincolns' family doctor and the surgeon general of the army. Dr. Leale says Mrs. Lincoln asked him to remain and that he, on her designation, continued to be professionally in charge of the case until the end.

"With what has been learned since then could he have been saved?" Dr. Leale was asked.

"No," said he. "No expedient known would have achieved more than we accomplished. Wounds of the kind suffered by Mr. Lincoln usually result in death immediately or within an hour. Keeping the president alive nine hours was itself a feat that would be remarkable, under like circumstances, now."

In his memoir he expresses the opinion that the physicians rendered an important public service in preserving Lincoln's life through the night. For Lincoln was president until the end. The general situation was critical. Had his death been instantaneous and become known at once—and under the conditions of the assassination the death would have been known publicly at once—events threatening the safety of the government might have followed. Subordinate authorities, as it was, had time to prepare for meeting and dealing with the situation.

While President Lincoln never spoke or evinced consciousness after he was wounded, Dr. Leale indicates in his memoir that the dying man may have been able to hear and understand much that went on about him during part of the time.

The injury produced a state of paralysis extending to the faculties of sight, speech and bodily movement; but power to receive impressions by hearing may have been with him at times during the night, Dr. Leale has stated.

"Did you ever meet and compare notes with others who were at Lincoln's bedside that night?" Dr. Leale, when interviewed by the writer, was asked.

"Never," he replied.

By Mrs. Lincoln's special direction he was given a place of honor at the funeral ceremonies in Washington. He still has the sword he wore on the occasion. The crepe he tied to his sword's hilt never has been removed. He was in civilian dress when he attended the dying Lincoln and still has the cuffs, stained by Lincoln's blood, which he wore that night.

"It was for a youngster, as I was, a terrible experience," Dr. Leale said. "After it was all over the reaction from the enormous responsibility that had been thrust upon me by fate was depressive. I couldn't help wondering

if I had done my best. I couldn't sleep. I went to the surgeon general and spoke to him about it. 'You did all that was possible,' he said to me. 'Now don't think about it.' Since then I have left the episode to history."

LEAVING the military service, Dr. Leale returned to New York, where he had been reared, added to his medical studies and became a distinguished practitioner. He made special studies abroad of Asiatic cholera and, both as a physician and a man of means, was a leader in the movement against children's diseases.

Likewise, Ferguson, the last of the cast at Ford's theater that night, pursued his profession actively more than 60 years thereafter. He was among the last of the oldtime troupers and, perhaps, the last of the great farceurs. When beyond 80 years old he did excellent work in motion pictures.

Little is known about the subsequent life of Jennie Gourlay, later Mrs. Struthers, except that for a long while before her death she lived most of the time at Milford, Pa. She liked to tell children of her experiences on the stage in Civil war times and of her witnessing one of the greatest of real life tragedies. But, like Dr. Leale and Mr. Ferguson, she carefully avoided the appearance of "capitalizing" her relation to the setting of that tragedy. That relation was so little known in her later years that apparently when she died not long ago no general news report of her passing went out to the world as was the case when Ferguson died.

Gone are those who had parts in Booth's escape, capture, death and burial, or in aftermath incidents having to do with those convicted of taking part in the conspiracy that led to Lincoln's death.

One of the last to die among those close to Booth at that time was John H. Surratt, whose mother, Mary E. Surratt, was hanged for alleged and circumstantially proved aid to Booth in pursuing the conspiracy.

Following the assassination Surratt fled the country, was discovered in Italy, escaped to Egypt and later was captured there. Brought back to this country, he was tried before a jury and acquitted. He died in Baltimore in 1916.

The other alleged conspirators were tried by a military court. In the consecrated ground of a cemetery in Washington a simple headstone, bearing only the words "Mrs. Surratt," marks the grave of the woman accused of assisting Booth. To the last she declared herself innocent.

The young army officer and his fiancée who sat with Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln at the theater that night later were married and subsequently met tragic deaths in France. Their son died a few years ago while a member of congress from Illinois.



# Physician Still Lives Who Attended Martyred Lincoln 63 Years Ago Today

Dr. Charles A. Leale, Now 86,  
Who Was at Deathbed of  
President, Shuns Subject.

SIXTY-THREE years now have passed since that night of April 14, 1865, when Abraham Lincoln died from the bullets of John Wilkes Booth.

Of persons who were friends of great man, there are left but a handful. Few there are, even, who can boast they ever saw him. The last of his children, Robert Todd Lincoln, died in 1926.

But Dr. Charles A. Leale, the first doctor to reach Lincoln after he was wounded and who watched over the President until the end came, still lives in New York. He is eighty-six. Though he has retired from active medical practice, he is in good health and serves on various hospital boards.

DR. LEALE was 23, and out of medical school for only a year, when he attended the dying Lincoln. He had joined the medical corps of the army, and was in charge of a ward for wounded officers in the United States General Hospital at Armory Square, Washington, when the assassination of the President occurred.

Mrs. Lincoln placed Dr. Leale in charge of the treatment of the wounded President. But medical aid could do nothing save prolong Lincoln's life for a few short hours. It was the night of April 14 that he was shot; the next morning he was dead.

OF those historic days Dr. Leale has a store of priceless memories. But he dislikes to go back over them. He prefers to look to the future, and to think and talk of the happenings and projects of today that interest



Dr. Charles A. Leale is the left figure in this painting of the scene of Abraham Lincoln's death. He was but twenty-three years of age at the time—a surgeon in the federal army.

him. New achievement is better, he holds, than retrospection.

DR. LEALE resides in New York with his daughter. He has a son in New York who is a doctor, and another who is an attorney.

For a half a century he was one of the leading physicians of the city, connected with various hos-

pitals, including Bellevue and the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb. To this latter interest he still devotes part of his time.

He has written extensively on medical surgery and scientific subjects, but though repeatedly urged to, has refused to write his own memoirs or his recollections of Lincoln and the war.

*ny Telegram 4-14-28*



## **LINCOLN'S WOUND WOULD BE FATAL EVEN TODAY, DOCTOR IN CASE SAYS**

Keeping President Lincoln alive for nine hours after he was shot by John Wilkes Booth was an accomplishment that not even modern medical science could have bettered. This opinion is expressed by Dr. Charles Augustus Leale, the physician in charge of the case, and perhaps the last person alive who participated in the tragedy in Ford's Theatre that fateful night.

As much as they have meant in the way of medical progress, the intervening 65 years since the tragedy have produced nothing that could have prolonged the life of the martyred President, Dr. Leale is convinced. The type of wound the President received usually results in immediate death, or at best the victim rarely lives an hour, he points out.

Another interesting aspect of the medical side of the case presented by Dr. Leale is that although paralyzed and unable to see or speak or move, the dying Lincoln may have had moments when he understood what was going on about him.

# DOCTOR OF DYING LINCOLN IS STILL LIVING

Fresh from Medical School, Charles A. Leale Was First to Reach Stricken President After Booth's Shot, and Held Charge of Case Till the End, Older Physicians Confirming His Prognosis of Wound—Preserved Emancipator's Life for Nine Precious Hours

By A. H. ULM

Time's inextinguishable curtain falls upon the witnesses and participants in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. And, as it falls, the unclosable gaps in the tragic incident seem destined to remain forever unexplained.

Today, 65 years after Booth's shot turned the quiet, calm performance of "Our American Cousin" into pandemonium, there apparently remains but one living person who participated in the event and its aftermath. Strangely enough, the last man alive who moved through that bewildering, history-making night was the first one to reach the side of the martyred President from beyond the box.

He is Dr. Charles Augustus Leale of New York; the story of whose connection with the event, though one of its most prominent aspects, is known to but few. A youth just out of medical school, Dr. Leale was the first to reach the dying President. It was he who took charge of the case and remained in charge of it until the President passed. It was he, barely out of school, whose prognosis was pronounced correct at the first glimpse of the President, and whose credit for keeping the President alive for nine of the gravest hours of America's history.

## HIS FIRST CASE

### AND MOST IMPORTANT ONE

Virtually his first case, it was his most important. And so indelibly did those nine hours leave their impress on the life of the young doctor that his one thought throughout the subsequent 65 years has been to forget.

Just recently, in Toledo, O., the Rev. Jackson C. Taylor, a former slave who was in Ford's Theatre the night Lincoln was shot, was killed by an automobile. Shortly before that, William J. Ferguson, the last survivor of the troupe of actors whose performance the President was witnessing, passed on. His death was preceded only a couple of years by that of a more prominent member of the company, Mrs. Jennie Gourlay, Struthers, who, as Jennie Gourlay, was second to the leading lady, Laura Keane, in the cast.

The printed program of the tragedy-marked performance contained a notice that on the following Saturday night a presentation of "The Octoborn" would be given for the benefit of Miss Gourlay, who was to play the lead. That performance never occurred. When the curtain was rung down after Booth's shot, Ford ceased to be a playhouse. Today only the original structural front wall stands. The government bought the property, and before long it probably would be turned into a museum. A bill providing for this now

"If Mrs. Struthers is gone—I thought she was still living—Dr. Leale is probably the only living person who, in so far as I know, was directly connected with the incidents immediately related to the assassination and its aftermath," says Col. O. H. Oldroyd, who for half a century has endeavored to keep up with the sequelae of the tragedy. Col. Oldroyd created and still directs the Lincoln Museum in Washington, now owned by the government in the house, across the street from the old theatre, in which Lincoln died.

**KNOWS, POSITIVELY OF NONE**

"There may be, probably are, still living a few persons who were in the audience that night and perhaps a few who witnessed aftermath incidents of the assassination, such as the removal of the President to this house. But I know positively of none, although a member of the Garrett family, in whose barn in Virginia, Booth was captured, was still living a few years ago.

"Even the long procession of men who said they helped carry Mr. Lincoln from the theatre seems to have ended. We haven't heard in several years of a living claimant to that distinction. It has never been established positively, but I am sure that through the ages I had it from a reliable witness that at least six men shared in it.

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Dr. Leale was present at that scene. So was Robert Lincoln, the President's son, who died only a few years ago. The two were long the only survivors of the group in the death chamber that night. And, curiously, they never met again after the body of Lincoln was taken from Washington, and, in so far as is known, neither of them ever revisited the place. Robert Lincoln was not in the theatre when his father was shot.

## FIRST TO REACH LINCOLN

Dr. Leale was not only a witness of the assassination but was also the first physician to reach the body of the wounded man. It was he who diagnosed the wound, administered first-aid treatment, and determined on the medical procedure that was followed to the end. Beyond a brief memoir which he read to a medical society a quarter of a century ago and deposited in several libraries, he never has discussed publicly his experiences of that night. In fact, so silent has he been that many persons who have known him since, have been unaware of his part in the events following Booth's assault.

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He was newly out of medical school with a commission in the medical corps of the Union army and was on duty at the general military hospital in Washington. Being off duty that night, he went to the theatre where he sat far back on the first floor. He heard the shot fired by the assassin and saw Booth jump from the box and fall upon the stage as one of the spurs the actor wore caught in the flag which draped the box. He heard some one in the box or on the stage ask in a loud voice if a physician was in the audience. Then he knew some one, but he had no notion who, had been injured. Much of an athlete, he leaped over rows of seats, fought his way through the panicky crowd and got to the box only a moment or two after the attack.

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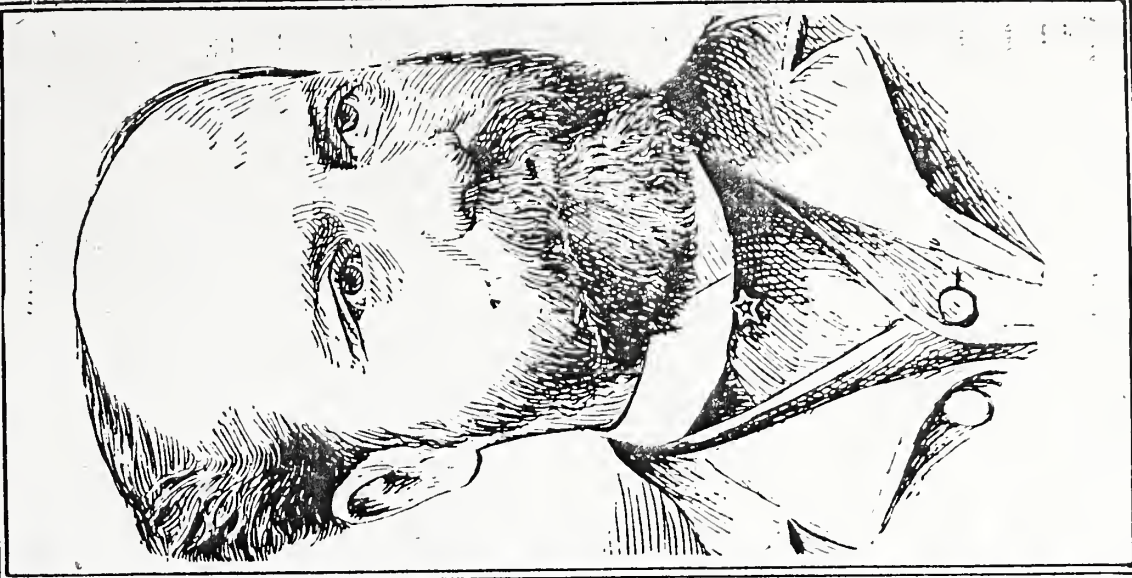
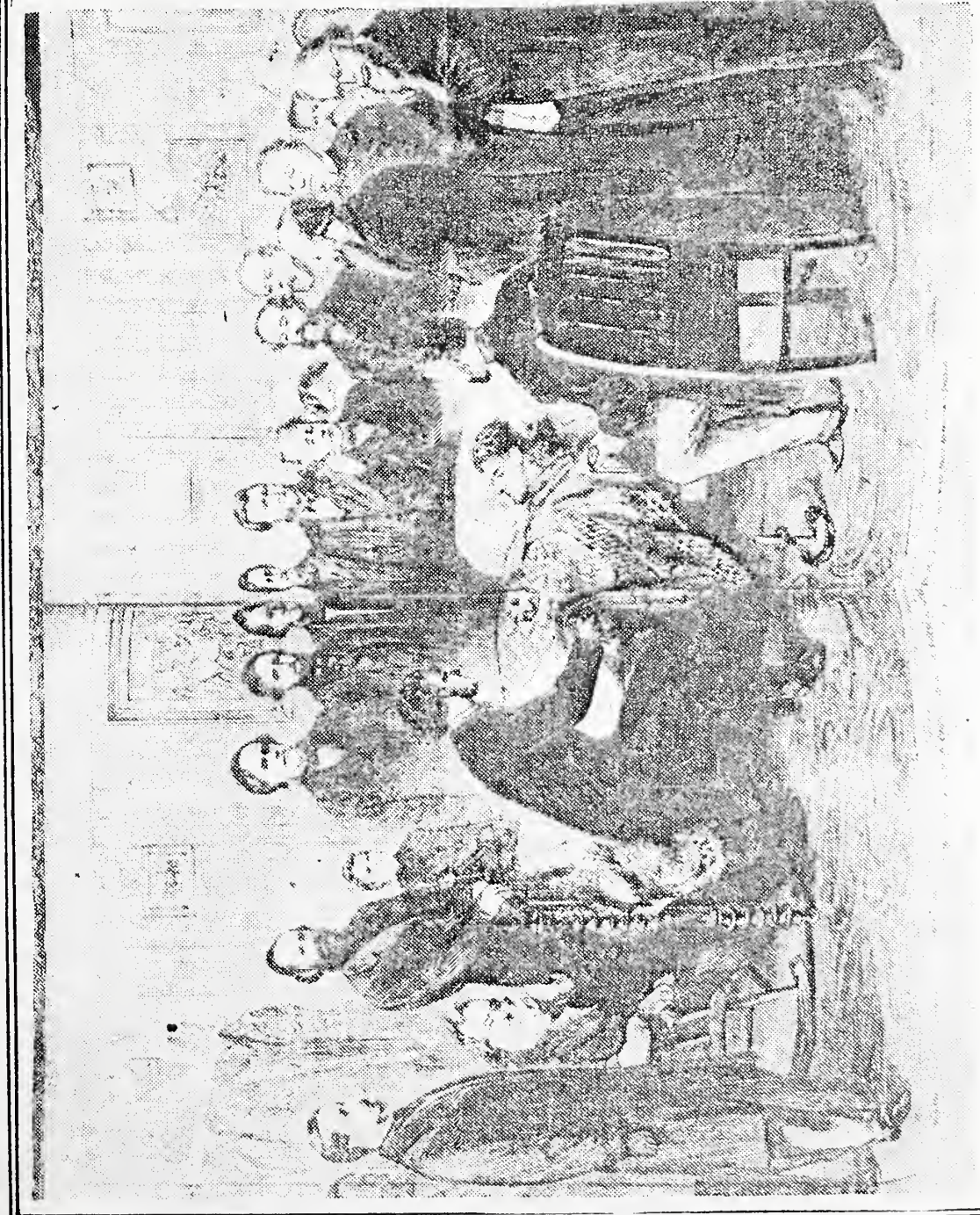
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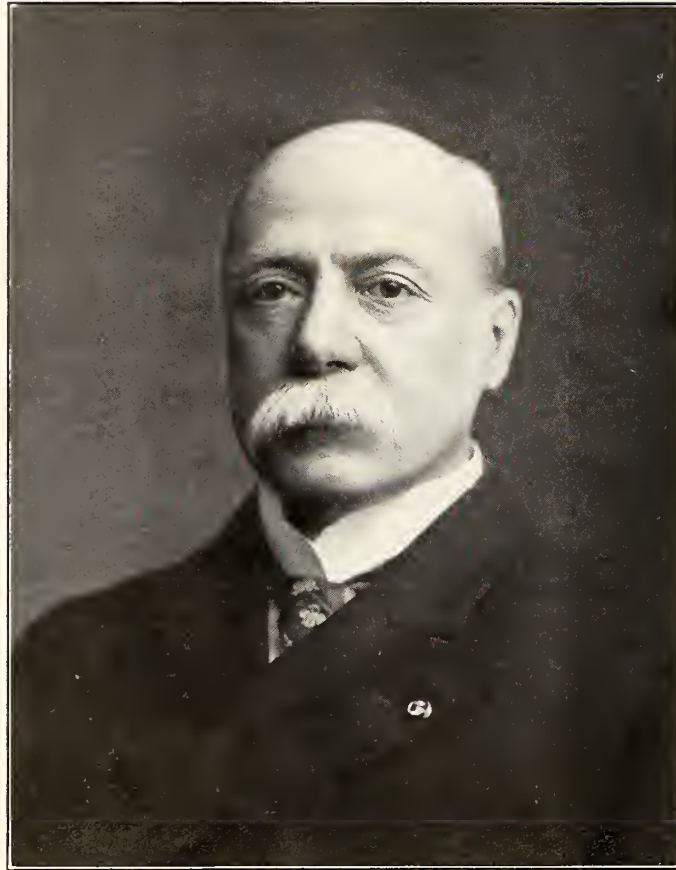


STILL VIVID IN DR. LEALE'S MEMORY IS THE NIGHT VIGIL AT LINCOLN'S DEATH-BED



The death-bed of Lincoln, from an old Harper's Weekly print. Right, Dr. Charles Augustus Leale.





*Charles A. Leale, M.D.  
Member of the Board of Directors,  
Consulting Physician  
and  
Chairman of the Committee of Instruction*

# The New York Times

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DR. CHARLES A. LEALE.

## DR. C. A. LEALE DIES; SAW LINCOLN SHOT

Was First Physician to Reach  
the Side of President at  
His Assassination.

WITH HIM TILL HIS DEATH

Veteran of Civil War, Who Lived to  
Be 90, Was Brevet Captain of  
the U. S. Volunteers.

Dr. Charles Augustus Leale, the first physician to reach the side of Abraham Lincoln after he had been shot by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre, Washington, on April 14, 1865, and who remained with the President until the end came the next day, died yesterday at his home

1,261 Madison Avenue. Dr. Leale was 90 years old and his death was attributed to the infirmities of age.

At the time of the assassination Dr. Leale, who had been graduated two months previously from the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, was surgeon in command of the commissioned officers ward of the United States Army General Hospital in Washington. He was in the theatre and saw Booth fire the fatal shot.

He went to the President's box immediately, identified himself, and was placed in charge by Mrs. Lincoln. With the aid of several others, he stretched the President on the floor of the box, and later removed him to the Peterson House, across the street from the theatre, where the President died.

Dr. Leale was born in New York March 28, 1842, the son of Captain William P. and Anna Maria Burr Leale. He was a grandson of Captain Richard Burr, who, in 1746, sent a cargo of corn to famine-stricken Ireland.

Dr. Leale began his medical studies at 18, the private pupil of Dr. Austin Flint Sr., in diseases of heart and lungs, and of Dr. Frank H. Hamilton in gunshot wounds and surgery. He also studied at various clinics and served a full term as medical cadet in the United States Army.

After he had been honorably discharged in January, 1866, with the rank of Brevet Captain in the United States Volunteers, he went to Europe, where he studied the Asiatic cholera.

On Sept. 3, 1867, he married Miss Rebecca Medwin Copcutt, who died in 1923. They had six children, the oldest of whom, Miss Annie Leale, died in 1915. The surviving children are Miss Lillian Leale, Marion Leale, Dr. Medwin Leale, Loyal Leale and Mrs. James Harper. Four grandchildren, Bianca M. Leale, Rosalind Leale, James Harper Jr. and Helen Leale Harper, also survive.

Until his retirement in 1928 Dr. Leale maintained a continuous interest in philanthropic, medical and scientific projects. He had proposed to the late Mayor Strong the use of public places for recreation purposes and advocated the use of floating hospitals. He served as chairman of the floating hospital committee and head of the Northwestern and Central Dispensaries, and for twenty years was a trustee of St. John's Guild and the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb.

He also was a member of the Society for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Medical Men, the American Medical Association, the Medical Society of the State of New York, the New York Pathological and Neurological Societies, the Academy of Medicine, Society of Medical Jurisprudence, Physicians' Mutual Aid Association, Museum of Natural History, Metropolitan Museum and Museum of the City of New York.

He was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest. Funeral services will be held there tomorrow at 10 A. M.

1935 ✓

## **FIRST PHYSICIAN TO TEND LINCOLN WHEN SHOT DIES**

### ***Dr. Charles Leale Dead at Age of 91.***

New York, June 13.—[Special.]—Dr. Charles A. Leale, the first surgeon to reach the side of President Lincoln on the night of his assassination in Ford's theater, Washington, and the last of the little group that stood at Lincoln's bedside in his last hours, died today at his home, 1261 Madison avenue. He was in his ninety-first year.

Dr. Leale was also the consulting physician during the weeks of effort to save the life of President Garfield, who also was assassinated. He retained an active interest in his profession until the end, and also was widely known as a philanthropist.

#### **Born in New York.**

He was born in this city March 26, 1842, the son of Capt. William Pickett Leale and Anna Maria Burr Leale, and the grandson of Capt. Richard Burr, who sent a cargo of corn to the famine stricken people of Ireland at his own expense in 1846.

After attending medical and surgical clinics in New York he served a full term as a medical cadet in the United States army, and later became acting assistant surgeon of the army and assistant surgeon of the United States volunteers. He was appointed executive officer and head of the ward for wounded officers in the United States army general hospital, Armory square, Washington, in 1865.

#### **With Lincoln Until Death.**

On the night of April 14, 1865, he was the first surgeon to reach President Lincoln after he was shot. He was placed in charge by Mrs. Lincoln and prolonged the President's life, remaining with him and holding his right hand when he died. His report of this was published in the medical and surgical history of the war of the rebellion.

After being mustered out of service in 1866 with the rank of captain, he worked abroad in foreign clinics, where he devoted much of his time to the study of Asiatic cholera. Returning to New York he opened an office for private practice and was active until a few years before his death.



**Last of the Death Watch.**

If you went to Washington in years gone by and visited the little brick house across the street from Ford's Theater where President Lincoln died in an upper room, the aged colored caretaker was certain to point to the famous painting, "Death of President Lincoln" by Littlefield, and the likeness of the young army physician who held the president's hand when he died. The young doctor was Dr. Charles A. Leale, now dead in New York, aged 90.

Leale was a young army surgeon on leave in Washington at the time of Lincoln's assassination and was at the theater on the night of April 14, 1865. He was the first surgeon to reach Lincoln, lifted him out of his chair and stretched him out on the floor in order that the strain on the heart might be relieved. Only his quick, intelligent work kept Lincoln alive for nine hours.

Leale had haunting memories of the little brick house across the street from Ford's Theater and found himself pulled back there often. He came frequently in the lifetime of the present attendant, corroborated facts about the position of the furniture in the room and other things as they were on that night 67 years ago.

He was the last of the Lincoln death watch, the last who heard Stanton's immortal words.

protection thus afforded them.

#### SAW LINCOLN SHOT.

Dr. Charles Augustus Leale, the first physician to reach the side of Abraham Lincoln after he had been shot by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre, Washington, on April 14, 1865, and who remained with the President until the end came the next day, died on June 13, at his home, 1261 Madison avenue, New York. Dr. Leale was 90 years old, and his death was attributed to the infirmities of age.

At the time of the assassination Dr. Leale, who had been graduated two months previously from the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, was surgeon in command of the commissioned officers ward of the United States Army General Hospital in Washington. He was in the theatre and saw Booth fire the fatal shot.

He went to the President's box immediately, identified himself, and was placed in charge of Mrs. Lincoln. With the aid of several others, he stretched the President on the floor of the box, and later removed him to the Peterson House, across the street from the theatre, where the President died.

Dr. Leale was born in New York March 26, 1842, the son of Captain William P. and Anna Maria Burr Leale. He was a grandson of Captain Richard Burr, who, in 1746, sent a cargo of corn to famine-stricken Ireland.

Dr. Leale began his medical studies at 18, the private pupil of Dr. Austin Flint, sr., in diseases of heart and lungs, and of Dr. Frank H. Hamilton in gunshot wounds and surgery. He also studied at various clinics and served a full term as medical cadet in the United States Army.

After he had been honorably discharged in January, 1866, with the rank of Brevet Captain in the United States Volunteers, he went to Europe, where he studied the Asiatic cholera.

Until his retirement in 1928 Dr. Leale maintained a continuous interest in philanthropic, medical and scientific projects. He had proposed to the late Mayor Strong the use of public piers for recreation purposes and advocated the use of floating hospitals. He served as chairman of the floating hospital committee and head of the Northwestern and Central Dispensaries, and for twenty years was a trustee of St. John's Guild and the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb.

## **First Surgeon To Reach Lincoln Dies**

**Dr. Charles A. Leale, Who  
Stayed With President  
Until Death, Succumbs.**

NEW YORK, June 13.—(A.P.)—Dr. Charles A. Leale, the first surgeon to reach the side of President Lincoln after the President was shot, and who remained at the President's side until his death, died today at his home in Madison Avenue. He was 90 years old.



N. Y. Times  
MONDAY, JUNE 13, 1932.

# Lincoln's Surgeon Dies at 91

## Dr. Charles A. Leale Was First Physician to Reach Wounded President's Side.

Dr. Charles A. Leale, the first surgeon to reach the side of President Lincoln on the night of his assassination in Ford's Theater, Washington, and the last of the little group that stood at Lincoln's bedside in his last hours, died today at his home, 1261 Madison avenue. He was in his ninety-first year.

Dr. Leale was also the consulting physician at the last illness of President Garfield. He retained an active interest in his profession until the end, and also was widely known as a philanthropist.

He was born in this city, March 26, 1842, the son of Capt. William Pickett Leale, and Anna Maria Burr Leale, and the grandson of Capt. Richard Burr, who sent cargo of corn to the famine stricken people of Ireland at his own expense in 1846.

Dr. Leale entered medical school when he was 18 years old and graduated from Bellevue Hospital Medical College. He was a private pupil of Prof. Frank H. Hamilton and Dr. Austin Flint.

After attending medical and surgical clinics in New York he served a full term as a medical cadet in the United States Army, and later became acting assistant surgeon of the army, and assistant surgeon of the United States Volunteers. He was appointed executive officer and head of the ward for wounded officers in the United States Army General Hospital, Armory Square, Washington, in 1865.

### First at Lincoln's Side.

On the night of April 14, 1865, he was the first surgeon to reach President Lincoln after he was shot. He was placed in charge by Mrs. Lincoln and prolonged the President's life, remaining with him and holding his right hand when he died. His report of this was published in the Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion.

After being mustered out of service in 1866 with the rank of captain, he worked abroad in foreign clinics where he devoted much of his time to the study of Asiatic cholera. Returning to New York he opened an office for private practice, and was active until a few years before his death.

He was head of the Northwestern Dispensary and the Central Dispensary for two years, a trustee of St. John's Guild for more than twenty years and president two terms, chairman of the Floating Hospital, trustee of the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb for more than twenty years, and an honorary trustee after his retirement in 1928. He was consulting physician to

Bellevue and Allied Hospitals for many years, and until his death.

### Member of Medical Societies.

In addition he held office in numerous medical, scientific and philanthropic societies. He was a delegate to the International Medical Congress at London in 1881; a member of the Society for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Medical Men; of the American Medical Association; the Medical Society of the State of New York; the New York Pathological Society; the New York Academy of Medicine; the New York Neurological Society; the New York Society of Medical Jurisprudence; the Physicians Mutual Aid Association; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Natural History; the Museum of the City of New York and a companion of the Lafayette Post, Grand Army of the Republic, and companion, first class, of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion.

He published essays on medical, surgical and scientific subjects, and it was he who suggested to Mayor Strong that municipal piers be used for recreational purposes.

On September 3, 1867, he married Rebecca Medwin Copcutt, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Copcutt, of New York and Yonkers, who died in 1923. He leaves five children, Lillian, Marion, Dr. Medwin Leale, Loyal Leale and Mrs. James Harper. A sixth child, Annie, died many years ago. He also leaves four grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning at the Church of Heavenly Rest, Fifth avenue and Ninetieth street.

## \$2,000 Reward Offered For Lost Pearl Necklace

A reward of \$2,000 is offered by the insurance firm of Toples & Harding, of 116 John street, for the return of a \$20,000 pearl necklace which Mrs. Lee Holstein, wife of a real estate operator, lost on the night of June 5.

Mrs. Holstein and her husband attended a banquet at the clubhouse of the Grand Street Boys' Association at 106 West Fifty-fifth street. They drove from their home at 575 Park avenue to the clubhouse in a taxicab and returned home in another cab. The loss was discovered soon after the Holsteins reached home. It was at once reported to the police.

# DR. LEALE IS DEAD; ATTENDED LINCOLN

First Physician to Reach  
Wounded President in  
Ford's Theatre Was 90

## ALSO CARED FOR GARFIELD

New York, June 13.—(AP)—The first physician to reach the side of the mortally wounded President Lincoln died today at the age of 90. He was Dr. Charles A. Leale.

He was consulting physician, also, when President Garfield succumbed to an assassin's bullet.

At the time of Lincoln's assassination Dr. Leale was executive officer of the United States Army General Hospital in Washington. When he reached Ford's Theatre he found the President crouched in a sitting posture, pulseless in a profound collapse. He stretched the wounded Executive out on the floor to cause recurrence of pulsation and then ordered him removed to the nearest house. At the same time he announced the wound would be fatal.

He then remained at the bedside of the dying President throughout the night and was holding his hand when the end came.

Dr. Leale was born in New York. He had five children, Lillian, Marion, Dr. Medwin, Loyal and Mrs. James Harper. His wife died in 1923.

He received his medical education at Bellevue Hospital Medical College and was appointed a medical cadet in the army in 1864. After special instruction in New York he received his M. D. degree from Bellevue and was assigned to the Washington hospital. He was honorably discharged in 1866 after contracting a severe illness.

Subsequent to his discharge he investigated Asiatic cholera in Europe and America and gave his services to the poor in the epidemic of 1866. He was the author of several technical books and papers and he contributed to New York a system by which thousands of mothers and sick children were given salt water baths on floating hospitals.

# The Death of Lincoln — as a Doctor Saw It

*N.Y. World Telegram, Feb 10, '36.*

His Daughter Gives Attending Surgeon's Description of Martyred President's Last Hours.

By HELEN WORDEN.

"YES, father held Lincoln's hand when he died," Miss Lillian Leale, of 383 Park Ave., said yesterday. "He was the surgeon in charge."

Dr. Charles Leale, a 24-year-old physician, happened to be in Ford's Theater the night President Lincoln was assassinated.

"He was in charge of the commanding officers' ward at the Army Square Hospital," Miss Leale said. "For the first time in months he had an evening off. There was a good show at Ford's, so he thought he'd take it in."



Dr. Leale sat in the orchestra. When Booth fired the shot at Lincoln someone shouted, "Is there a surgeon in the house?"

"Father answered the call," Lillian said. "He had Mr. Lincoln carried across the street into Mr. Peterson's house and stayed with the President until he died."

Many artists have painted the deathbed scene of Lincoln. They all put in Dr. Leale. A photograph of the Littleton painting is included in the collection of Lincolniana which Miss Leale and her family have loaned to the Lincoln Hotel for the exhibition of Lincolniana which opens there Wednesday, Lincoln's Birthday.

Dr. Leale was a New York man. He returned here after the civil war and carried on a practice until his death in 1932. His son, Loyal, and two of his daughters, the Misses Lillian and Marion Leale, live at 383 Park Ave. Helen, another daughter, who married James Harper, makes her home in Paris.

## More Bits of Lincolniana.

AS February 12 draws near, odd and interesting fragments are turning up which fit into the mosaic of Lincoln's life.

Mrs. Mary Pickering Stever and Martha and Catherine Pickering of Jamaica, L. I., have a letter written by Abraham Lincoln to William Pickering, a State Governor during Lincoln's administration. With the letter goes a little piece of blood-stained wall paper taken from the box of the Ford Theater just after Lincoln was assassinated. The Pickering sisters are Governor Pickering's granddaughters.



Daniel Patterson, the Interborough Railway executive, prizes a Hicks portrait of Lincoln painted in 1862.

Mrs. George H. B. Mitchell, of 290 West End Ave., has a letter written by Lincoln to her grandfather, Barney Williams, shortly after Lincoln became President.

Barney Williams was a famous civil war actor known as "The Irish Boy." His wife was called "The Yankee Girl." Lincoln knew and liked them both.



HE WAS BEYOND HELP

Oakland Tribune 2-12-52

# Lincoln Doctors Did Best

By ARTHUR J. SNIDER, Chicago Daily News Science Writer

CHICAGO, Feb. 12.—Could President Lincoln have been saved if the doctors of his time had present-day medical knowledge and surgical equipment?

Dr. Otto Eisenschiml, a Chicago chemist and Lincoln scholar, says most medical belief indicates not.

Based on his study of research materials and consultations with leading Chicago doctors, Dr. Eisenschiml says:

"It is a compliment to Lincoln's bedside attendants that, if modern scientists had been in charge, they would have proceeded in principle much as did their colleagues of 87 years ago."

Lincoln was shot in Ford's theater on April 14, 1865, about 10:13 p.m.

## SHOT IN HEAD

John Wilkes Booth, the assassin, fired a round bullet, a half-inch in diameter, from probably no farther than two feet away.

The bullet hit Lincoln in the head.

It made a clearly cut hole as if done with a punch.

A young Army surgeon, Dr. Charles A. Leale, who was in

the theater, was the first doctor at his side.

Seeing no blood, he removed the President's upper garments. He then had the good sense, says Dr. Eisenschiml, to lift his eyelids and note unmistakable signs of brain damage.

He first tried artificial respiration by breathing into Lincoln's mouth. A small amount of diluted brandy brought a fluttering pulse to the President, indicating heart and lung action.

## JOURNEY VETOED

Leale vetoed as too dangerous a suggestion that the chief executive be moved to the White House. He feared the jarring over the cobblestone streets.

The President was taken to Petersen's boarding house across the street, and undressed to make sure there was no other injury.

Hot water bottles and mustard plaster were applied to help increase circulation.

Brandy again was tried but the President could not swallow. No drugs of any kind were administered.

By this time Dr. Robert K. Stone, the Lincoln family physician, and Dr. Joseph K.

Barnes, surgeon-general of the U.S. Army, were on the scene.

But Leale was left nominally in charge, in accordance with time-honored medical ethics.

About 2 a.m. a fruitless finger probe was made for the bullet, Dr. Eisenschiml finds. About 4:30 a.m. breathing became painful and pulse irregular. Lincoln died at 7:22 a.m.

## MODERN TREATMENT

Today, Dr. Eisenschiml says, doctors would not have inserted unwashed fingers in the wound. Antiseptic principles were not understood then.

But the principle of keeping the patient quiet would have been followed today. Sedatives would now be given, and blood clots would be removed by irrigation.

Efforts would be made now to ease pressure on the brain, possibly give sugar solution by vein.

But doctors would not probe for the bullet for at least 48 hours.

Many believe, says Dr. Eisenschiml, that even if Lincoln had survived, he would have been at least partly paralyzed, totally blind and possibly without an active brain.

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once over

# Lightly...

by Paul Light

## '... BELONGS TO THE AGES'

IN THE "MEDICAL AND SURGICAL HISTORY OF THE War of the Rebellion" is a matter-of-fact report which begins:

"The case of A. L., aged 56 years, shot in the head, at Washington, on the evening of April 14, 1865, by a large, round ball, from a Deringer pistol. . . ."

But as blasé as this medical case history may be, no one other man's death has been so extensively and accurately reported as the final hours of Abraham Lincoln. . . .

Most Americans are familiar with the tragic details. . . .

How Lincoln's bodyguard deserted his watchful post, better to see the play in Ford's theater that April night.

How Lincoln, apparently hearing a noise, turned his head slightly just as the assassin, John Booth, pulled the fateful trigger and then leaped out of the presidential box to the stage 14 feet below. How that turning of the presidential head insured his death by the bullet's location in the brain.

But how many know that the life of Abraham Lincoln would have ended some ten hours earlier than it did if a young Army officer hadn't strolled by chance into Ford's theater that night.

Dr. Charles A. Leale, was an Army surgeon.

The performance of "Our American Cousin" already had started when he entered the theater and looked for a seat.

All he could get was a place in the orchestra circle, on the same side as Lincoln's box but some 40 feet away.

Dr. Leale heard the shot

from Booth's pistol; saw the agonized struggle between the assassin and Maj. Henry R. Rathbone, a guest in the presidential box; saw Booth leap from the box to the stage and stagger off.

Dr. Leale immediately ran toward the presidential box. It took a few frantic moments to open the barred door.

Once inside he was the first physician to reach President Lincoln's side. The president was slumped in a high backed rocking chair, his head resting on his breast, and his eyes closed.

Dr. Leale felt immediately for the pulse.

It was not discernible. He stripped away the president's upper garments, looking for stab wounds. There were none.

Then he lifted one of the president's eyelids.

The brain injury was immediately discernible to the trained eye of this young surgeon, schooled in the brutal wounds of war.

He then noticed Abraham Lincoln no longer was breathing. . . .

No pulse, no respiration, in that day and age, was tantamount to death. . . .

But young Dr. Leale didn't intend to give up this patient without a fight.

Kneeling on the floor close to the now silent form of the president, the Army surgeon opened Lincoln's lips and placed his own against them.

In a regular respiration cycle, he began to breathe, forcing his air into Lincoln's lifeless lungs.

Agonizing moments passed. Witnesses held their breath. Mrs. Lincoln sobbed. Maj. Rathbone held his dripping knife wounds and waited.

Suddenly the president's body twitched. His chest fluttered, then heaved in a massive breath. His heart picked up a regular tempo.

The battle for life had been won . . . if temporarily.

It was this same young Army doctor who stayed with Lincoln through that last night as the president's tall form lay on a bed in Petersen's boarding house across from the Washington, D. C., theater. . . .

It was Dr. Leale, too, who lit a candle just a few moments before death and held it in front of the president's face, hoping against hope that Mr. Lincoln would respond to the light and awaken before the end.

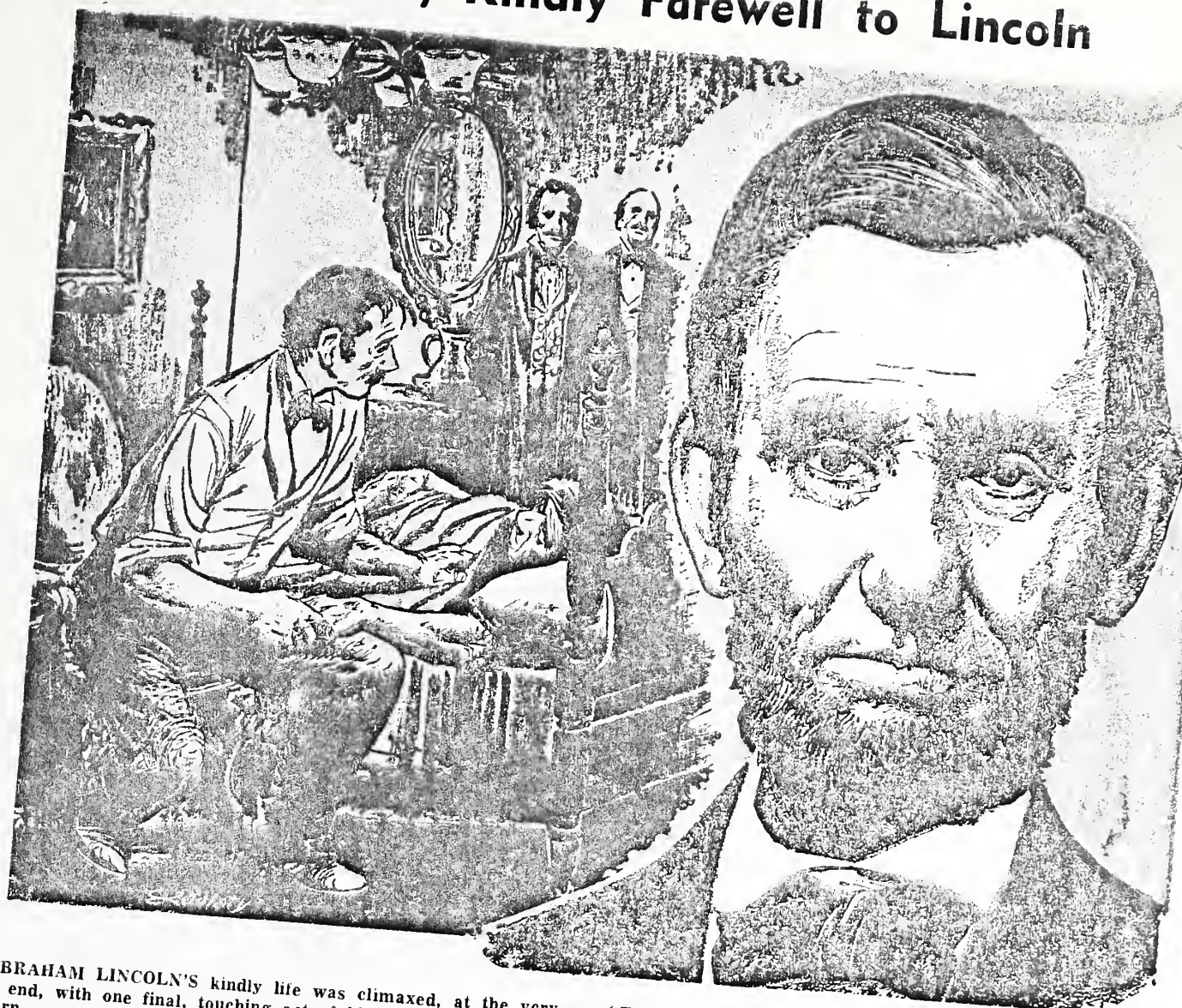
But Lincoln slipped quietly from unconsciousness into eternity.

He belonged to the ages. . . .



2-12-57

# One Last, Kindly Farewell to Lincoln



**A** BRAHAM LINCOLN'S kindly life was climaxed, at the very end, with one final, touching act of kindness shown him in return.

A young assistant surgeon from the army, by merest chance, was snatched into the center of the drama surrounding Lincoln's last hours.

Charles A. Leale, because he was first to respond to the call for a doctor in Ford's Theater, became the doctor in charge of the case.

Dr. Leale's memoirs give a terse story of the humble gesture of friendship which was a final symbol of human compassion.

Lincoln was a hero to Dr. Leale. Earlier in the evening the doctor had joined a crowd outside the White House to hear the President say a few words about the conclusion of the war.

"I was profoundly impressed with his divine appearance as he stood in the rays of the light which penetrated the windows of the White House," the doctor wrote later.

"The influence thus produced gave me an intense desire again to behold his face and study the characteristics of the 'Savior of his Country.' I changed into civilian dress and hurried to Ford's Theater."

Dr. Leale was the first person to enter the box after Booth's shot reverberated. He gave first aid but knew immediately that the assassin's blow was mortal.

He directed the distraught knot of men who carried Lincoln across the street through sobbing crowds. Then in the small room where they laid him, he sat in attendance at the shadowy bedside during the remaining hours.

It was Dr. Leale who offered the fallen hero mankind's final, gentle gesture of farewell.

These are his words:

"Knowing that frequently, just before departure, recognition and reason return to those who have been unconscious, caused me for several hours to hold his hand firmly within my grasp to let him in his blindness know, if possible, that he was in touch with humanity and had a friend."



**ABE ADMIRER**

## ***Story Tells of Lincoln's Medical Aid***

CHICAGO (AP)—A young assistant surgeon was the first physician to reach Abraham Lincoln's side after an assassin's bullet tore into his brain.

The surgeon, Dr. Charles A. Leale, 23, was an admirer of Lincoln and had learned the president would be at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., the night of April 14, 1865, to see the play, "Our American Cousin."

During the third act, John Wilkes Booth, entered Lincoln's box and shot him in the head. Leale, horrified sprinted to the box and bent over the president's still form.

An article in the current issue of RX Health, a medical magazine, commemorates the 154th birthday anniversary of the Civil War president, who was born February 12, 1809.

The magazine, with quotes from Leale's memoirs, details the young physician's fight to keep Lincoln alive.

Leale gave artificial respiration. Leale also massaged Lincoln's chest in the heart area. After a few moments, the president's heart began to beat feebly. And he began to breathe irregularly.

The president never regained consciousness, Leale wrote, and died at 7:21 a.m., April 15, 1865.

# 'Blood on the Moon'

By HARRY GOLDEN

Still thinking about the assassination of Mr. Kennedy, I went back to Carl Sandburg's chapter on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865, in the Sandburg monumental biography of the 16th president, "The War Years" (Carl Sandburg, Harcourt, Brace). Sandburg calls the chapter, "Blood on the Moon," from Macbeth (Act III, Scene 5):

**"Upon the corner of the moon**

**There hangs a vaporous drop profound. . . ."**

Like Shakespeare, Sandburg prepares the final tragedy with symbols of menace and ominous brooding:

**"Cold, raw weather, gusty and changeable met  
those who stepped from indoor comfort the  
afternoon of April 14. . . .The covering shawl  
of night was anonymous and indecisive."**

Sandburg calls assassin John Wilkes Booth "the Outsider" so that we sense the irony of Lincoln's unawareness that death stalks the presidential box.

We are also introduced to John F. Parker, one of the four officers detailed from the Washington police to guard the President. The key to Lincoln's murder was Parker's departure from duty. After the President, Mrs. Lincoln, and their guests, Major Rathbone and his fiancée, Miss Harris, were seated in the box, detective Parker left the theater.

Sandburg's Blood on the Moon has an intense dramatic tension. For if it includes the villainy of John Wilkes Booth, and the absence of Parker, it also includes the heroism and nobility of Charles A. Leale, assistant surgeon, United States Volunteers, the first doctor to attend Lincoln in the theater. Leale specifically came to the theater to see Lincoln whom he admired and respected.

The chapter concludes with John F. Parker's realization, and Dr. Leale's specific detail:

Dr. Leale examined Major Rathbone's bleeding arm where Booth had slashed it; an almost instantaneous glance revealed the fact that the major was in no immediate danger. A moment later Leale knelt beside the stricken President, saying to no one in particular, "I am a United States Army surgeon." Dr. Leale held Mrs. Lincoln's outstretched hand while she cried piteously, "Oh, doctor, is he dead? Will you take charge of him? Oh, my dear husband, my dear husband."

Sandburg writes of those last moments:

**"His (Leale's) eyes happened to fall on his  
(own) wrists and detachable cuffs. They  
had been laundered stiff and immaculately  
white. Now they were limp, wet, blood-  
soaked. He decided he would keep the cuffs  
as long as he lived. To him they were 'stained  
with the martyr's blood.'"**

Lilian Leale of New York City, who was active in Episcopal charitable and religious work, died April 17th at her home at the age of 91.

She was the daughter of Dr. Charles A. Leale who attended President Abraham Lincoln after he had been shot in Ford's Theatre. After her father's death, Miss Leale was consulted by authors and many others interested in her store of Lincoln information.

Miss Leale was formerly president of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Church of the Heavenly Rest. She served on the boards of various Children's Homes, the New York Women's Bible Society and the Church Women's League for Patriotic Services, and was a member of the New York Women's Chaplains' committee of Bellevue Hospital, the Friends of the Cathedral, the New York Altar Guild, and the Cathedral Guild of St. John the Divine.

Surviving are two sisters, Mrs. James R. Sharp and Mrs. James Harper.



NY Daily News  
2/15/85

## 'Treasures'

• The original eyewitness report of "The Assassination and Death of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States," by Dr. Charles H. Leale, assistant surgeon at the U.S. General Hospital in Washington, D.C., who was in the audience at Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865, and was the first doctor to attend to the dying President.

• A portrait of Benjamin Franklin by Duplessis, believed to be the only one he ever posed for.

• Robert Fulton's original manuscript, 1806, and seven detailed watercolors for the design and development of submarine vessels, submarine bombs and the mode of attack. Fulton presented these to the British government and the first submarine was built according to these plans.

If these are a few of your favorite things, then this is for you: "Treasures from the New York Public Library," an exhibition of rare and unique items from the library's vast holdings, opens today at the central research branch, Fifth Ave. and 42d St., where it runs through May 24.



*Illustration from  
Carolingian manuscript  
on vellum, c. 850*

REVIEW: "Good Samaritan Surgeon Wrongly Accused of Contributing to President Lincoln's Death: An Experimental Study of the President's Fatal Wound," by John K. Lattimer, M.D., Sc.D., F.A.C.S., and Angus Laidlaw, Journal of the American College of Surgeons, Vol. 182, p. 431-448, May 1996.

Dr. John Lattimer ought to be well known to most of our readers. In addition to many appearances as a lecturer, he is also the author of the 1980 book, Kennedy And Lincoln, probably the most complete and expert examination of the medical and ballistic aspects of the assassinations of both presidents. Dr. Lattimer has also written numerous articles expertly discussing both the medical and weapons side of the story, and this effort is probably his most complete one yet. His co-author for this article, Angus Laidlaw, is an expert on muzzle-loading weapons, such as Booth's pistol. Spurred by an article published in 1995 questioning whether the doctors who attended Lincoln -- especially Dr. Charles A. Leale -- might have mismanaged their patient and contributed to his death, Dr. Lattimer has gone to a great deal of trouble to investigate the case. He shows us how, through a careful reading of accounts, both by the attending doctors and by the doctors who performed the autopsy, the treatment given Lincoln was entirely appropriate. Dr. Leale, though young, had received special training and experience which made him highly qualified to treat the stricken President.

Through tests conducted on real skulls, using a replica of the pistol used by Booth, Lattimer shows and explains the nature of the wound and why it was fatal. He compares Lincoln's wound with the fatal injury received by Senator Robert Kennedy more than a century later, convincingly eliminating the possibility that Lincoln might have survived, either in his time or with the vastly improved medical technology of ours.

Only a couple of very minor problems appear in this otherwise excellent article. The autopsy is described as taking place in the "Lincoln" bedroom, possibly misleading the reader to suppose that the room referred to is the large room so designated today. The present-day "Lincoln bedroom" was not a bedroom at all in Lincoln's time, but was used as the President's office. The autopsy was conducted in the corner room down the hall which was Lincoln's actual bedroom. Likewise, one of the illustrations is described as "Lincoln Derringer Skull Wounds," implying that the actual derringer pistol that killed Lincoln was used here. These are not errors made by Dr. Lattimer, only slightly misleading statements which might fool the less attentive reader. Dr. Lattimer admits that some guesswork went into his tests; for instance, we do not know how much powder Booth used or exactly how close to the target he held his pistol. Reading this study one is easily convinced that Dr. Lattimer's guesses are expertly made, and that most of what he reports is not guesswork but based upon careful scholarship and experimentation. This is undoubtedly as close to the facts as it is possible to get.

Having been the first  
of our profession who arrived to the assistance  
of our late President, and having been  
requested by Mrs. Lincoln to do what I  
could for him I assumed the charge un-  
til the Surgeon General and Dr. Stone  
his family physician arrived, which was  
about 20 minutes after we had placed him  
in bed in the house of Mr. Petersen oppo-  
site the theatre, and as I remained wi-  
th him until his death, I humbly sub-  
mit the following brief account.

I arrived at Ford's



Theatre about 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> P.M. April 14/65 and  
procured a seat in the dress circle about  
10 feet from the Presidents Box. The  
play was then progressing and in a  
few minutes I saw the President, Mrs  
Lincoln, Major Rathbone and Miss  
Harris enter, while proceeding to the  
Box they were seen by the audience who  
cheered which was reciprocated by the  
President and Mrs Lincoln by a smile  
and bow.

The party was preceded  
by an attendant who after opening  
the door of the box and closing it after

they had all entered, took a seat near  
by for himself.

The theatre was well  
filled and the play of "Our American  
Cousin" progressed very pleasantly un-  
til about half past ten, when the re-  
port of a pistol was distinctly heard  
and about a minute after a man of  
low stature with black hair and eyes,  
was seen leaping to the stage beneath,  
holding in his hand a drawn dagger.

While descending  
his heel got entangled in the Ameri-  
can flag, which was hung in front

of the box, causing him to stumble when he struck the stage, but with a single bound he regained the use of his limbs and ran to the opposite side of the stage, flourishing in his hand a drawn dagger and disappearing behind the scenes.

I then heard cries that the President had been murdered, which were followed by those of "Kill the murderer" "Shoot him" etc, which came from different parts of the audience.

I immediately



ran to the Presidents box and as soon as the door was opened was admitted and introduced to Mrs. Lincoln when she exclaimed several times: "O Doctor, do what you can for him, do what you can." I told her we would do all that was possibly could.

When I entered the box the ladies were very much excited. Mr. Lincoln was seated in a high backed arm-chair with his head leaning towards his right side supported by Mrs. Lincoln who was

weeping bitterly. Miss Harris was near her left and behind the President.

While approaching the President I sent a gentleman for brandy and another for water.

When I reached the President he was in a state of general paralysis, his eyes were closed and he was in a profoundly comatose condition, while his breathing was intermittent and exceedingly stertorous. I placed my finger on his right radial pulse but could perceive no movement of the artery. His two gentlemen

now arrived, I requested them to assist me to place him in a recumbent position, and as I held his head and shoulders, while doing this my hand came in contact with a clot of blood near his left shoulder.

Supposing that he had been stabbed there I asked a gentleman to cut his coat and shirt off from that part, to enable me if possible to check the hemorrhage which I supposed took place from the subclavian artery or some of its branches.



Before they had proceeded as far as the elbow I commenced to examine his head (as no wound near the shoulder was found) and soon passed my fingers over a large firm clot of blood situated about one inch below the superior curved line of the occipital bone.

The coagula I easily removed and passed the little finger of my left hand through the perfectly smooth opening made by the ball, and found that it had entered the cranium.

As soon as I removed my finger a slight oozing of blood followed and his breathing became more regular and less stertorous. The brandy and water now arrived and a small quantity was placed in his mouth, which passed into his stomach, where it was retained.

Dr. C. F. Taft and Dr. A. F. A. King now arrived and after a moments consultation we agreed to have him removed to the nearest house, which we immediately did, the above named with others assisting.

When we arrived  
at the door of the box, the passage  
was found to be densely crowded by  
those who were rushing towards that  
part of the theatre. I called out twice  
"Guards clear the passage," which was  
so soon done that we proceeded with  
out a moments delay with the President  
and were not in the slightest interrupt  
ed until he was placed in bed in the  
house of Mrs. Peterson, opposite the  
theatre, in less than 20 minutes from  
the time he was assassinated.

The street in



front of the theatre before we had left it was filled with the excited populace, a large number of whom followed us into the house.

As soon as we arrived in the room offered to us, we placed the President in bed in a diagonal position, as the bed was too short a part of the foot was removed to enable us to place him in a comfortable position.

The windows were opened and at my request a Captain present made all leave the

room except the medical gentlemen  
and friends.

As soon as we  
placed him in bed we removed his  
clothes and covered him with blan-  
kets. While covering him I found  
his lower extremities very cold from  
his feet to a distance several in-  
ches above his knees.

I then sent  
for bottles of hot water and hot  
blankets, which were applied to his  
lower extremities and abdomen.

Several other

Physicians and Surgeons about this time arrived among whom was Dr. R. H. Stone, who had been the President's Physician since the arrival of his family in the city.

After having been introduced to Dr. Stone I asked him if he would assume charge (telling him at the time all that had been done and describing the wound) he said that he would and approved of the treatment.

The Surgeon General and Surgeon Crane in a few



minutes arrived and made an examination of the wound.

When the President was first laid in bed a slight ecchymosis was noticed on his left eyelid and the pupil of that eye was slightly dilated, while the pupil of the right eye was contracted.

About 11 P.M. the right eye began to protrude which was rapidly followed by an increase of the ecchymosis until it encircled the orbit extending above the supra orbital ridge and

7

below the infra orbital foramen.

The wound was kept open by the Surgeon General by means of a silver probe, and as the President was placed diagonally on the bed his head was supported in its position by Surgeon Crane and Dr Taft, relieving each other.

About 2 P.M.

the Hospital Steward who had been sent for a Nelaton's probe, arrived and an examination was made by the Surgeon General, who introduced it to a distance of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, when

it came in contact with a foreign substance, which laid across the track of the ball.

This being easily passed the probe was introduced several inches further, when it again touched a hard substance, which was at first supposed to be the ball, but as the bulb of the probe on its withdrawal did not indicate the mark of lead, it was generally thought to be another piece of loose bone.

The probe was introduced a second time and the



Ball was supposed to be distinctly felt  
by the Surgeon General, Surgeon General  
and Dr. Stone.

After this second ex-  
ploration nothing further was done  
with the wound except to keep the  
opening free from coagula, which if  
allowed to form and remain for a very  
short time, would produce signs of in-  
creased compression: the breathing be-  
coming profoundly stertorous and  
intermittent and the pulse to be more  
feeble and irregular.

This pulse which

was several times counted by Mr Ford and noted by Dr King, ranged until 12 P.M. from between 40 to 64 beats per minute, and his respiration about 24 per minute, were loud and stertorous.

At 1 A.M. his pulse suddenly increasing in frequency to 100 per minute, but soon diminished gradually becoming less feeble until 4.54 A.M. when it was 48 and hardly perceptible.

At 6.40 A.M. his pulse could not be counted, it being

very intermittent, two or three pulsations being felt and followed by an intermission, when not the slightest movement of the artery could be felt.

The inspirations now became very short, and the expirations very prolonged and labored accompanied by a guttural sound.

6.50 A.M. The respirations cease for some time and all eagerly look at their watches until the profound silence is disturbed by a prolonged inspiration, which was soon followed by a sonorous expiration



The Surgeon General  
now held his finger to the carotid artery. Col. Crane held his head, Mr. Stone  
who was sitting on the bed, held his  
left pulse, and his right pulse was  
held by myself.

At 7.20 A.M. he  
breathed his last and "the spirit fled  
to God who gave it."

During the night the  
room was visited by many of his friends.  
Mrs Lincoln with Mrs. Senator  
Nixon came into the room three or  
four times during the night.

The President's son  
Capt. R. Lincoln, remained with  
his father during the greater part of  
the night.

Immediately after  
death had taken place, we all bowed,  
and the Rev. Dr. Gurley supplicated  
to God in behalf of the bereaved fa-  
mily and our afflicted country.

True copy.

(signed) Charles A. Leale  
M.D.

L. 262. S. G. O. 1865

Chas A Leale,

Report on Death of  
President Lincoln,



## Newly discovered document sheds light on Lincoln's last hours -

**CNN.com**

*By Dugald McConnell and Brian Todd, CNN*

*updated 8:21 PM EDT, Thu June 7, 2012*

CNN.com

(CNN) -- A newly discovered account of the shooting of Abraham Lincoln, and his death the next morning, gives a vivid and moving picture of the calamity.

Dr. Charles Leale was in the audience at Ford's Theater when Lincoln was shot, and was the first to attempt to treat the stricken president.

In a report believed written the next day, April 15, 1865, Leale writes, "the report of a pistol was distinctly heard and about a minute after a man of low stature with black hair and eyes was seen leaping to the stage beneath, holding in his hand a drawn dagger." Stumbling as he leaped from the president's box, the man "ran to the opposite side of the stage, flourishing in his hand a drawn dagger and disappearing behind the scene."

Leale ran to the president's box, about 40 feet from where he'd been sitting, where he encountered Mary Lincoln. She said, " 'O Doctor, do what you can for him! Do what you can!' I told her we would do all that we possibly could," Leale writes.

Then he saw the president. "He was in a state of general paralysis, his eyes were closed and he was in a profoundly comatose condition."

Leale was just 23, and had only barely begun practicing medicine after his service in the Civil War. He describes how he tried to treat the injury, beginning with asking another man to cut off Lincoln's coat and shirt to find any stab wounds.

Leale first believed Lincoln had been stabbed, because of that sighting of John Wilkes Booth wielding a knife. But soon Leale realized the president's injury was a gunshot in the back of his head.

Leale writes that he "passed the little finger of my left hand through the perfectly smooth opening made by the ball, and found that it had entered the encephalon. As soon as I removed my finger a slight oozing of blood followed and his breathing became more regular." Lincoln is then given some brandy, and two more doctors arrive.

The report was found by Helena Iles Papaioannou, a researcher for the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, at the National Archives in Washington. She discovered it among the papers of the U.S. surgeon general. Her group's mission is to collect all documents "to and from Abraham Lincoln," she said, and she came upon a copy of Leale's report by accident on May 21. The report is not in Leale's own hand, but is a "true copy" written by a clerk.

"Its immediacy makes it so very moving," said Papaioannou. "But it's also so very clinical, and you realize how awful it was -- the injury that Lincoln sustained was just horrific."

Read the full document

Standing outside Ford's Theater in downtown Washington, Papaioannou explained it was too far to take Lincoln to the White House, so the doctors took him to a house across the street. "You can see how narrow the street is," she said, pointing from Ford's Theater across to the historic Peterson House, where tourists were taking guided tours of the site. "Even that little journey was traumatic."

There is no indication that Leale and the other doctors had any way to save Lincoln.

"You get a sense of helplessness," said Papaioannou. "I think it was fairly immediate that he realized that the president wasn't going to recover." Papaioannou said that, to her, the most moving part of Leale's report is his account of covering Lincoln shortly after the president was carried to a back bedroom of the Peterson House.

"He talks about how the president's legs -- his lower extremities, from the knees down -- were cold, and they brought him hot water bottles and hot blankets. I find that a very touching part of the report."

The document also describes in clinical terms the president's deterioration that night. Near the end of the report it states: "At 7:20 a.m. he breathed his last and 'the spirit fled to God who gave it.' "

The very last line of the report seems to relay how absorbed Leale became in the gravity of the moment. "Immediately after death had taken place, we all bowed and the Rev. Dr. Gurley supplicated to God in behalf of the bereaved family and our afflicted country."

Papaioannou talks about the moment she discovered this document. "I took it out of the box, and started reading through it -- reading parts out to my colleagues who sat at the same table as me. ... We realized we had something special on our hands."

John Elliff, with the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia, said the newly discovered report largely corroborates the account that Leale eventually published over 40 years later, in 1909.

While it adds only a few details to known accounts of Lincoln's final hours, Elliff said, "this report has more exact times and pulse rate measurements through the night -- an intriguing new detail for historians."

Agreeing with the researchers who found it, Elliff said that the document has a compelling immediacy, and is unclouded by the passage of time.

"The original report does get you right close to the event -- knowing that the doctor leaves the bedside and writes it within the day," he said.

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THE AUSTRALIAN

FRIDAY, JUNE 8, 2012 P12  
www.theaustralian.com.au/theworld

## Doctor's account of bid to save Lincoln found after 147 years



PICTURES: AFP

The pistol used to assassinate the president and, right, Charles Leale, the first doctor on the scene

WILL PAVIA  
NEW YORK

THE patient had been shot in the head and the young doctor placed one finger in the "perfectly smooth opening made by the ball". Fresh out of medical school, Charles Leale was trying to save Abraham Lincoln in the frenzied moments after a shot interrupted a performance of *Our American Cousin* at the Ford's Theatre, Washington, on April 14, 1865.

He was the first physician on the scene and a clerk's copy of his account of the 10 hours that followed, set down hours after he left the dead US president's bedside, has been found at the National Archives in Washington.

Leale's account, as "the first of our profession who arrived to the assistance of our late president", takes in the drama of the moment

— the sight of the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, "a man of low stature, with black hair and eyes", leaping down on to the stage.

"While descending, his heel got entangled in the American flag which hung in front of the box, causing him to stumble when he hit the stage, but with a single bound he recovered the use of his limbs and ran to the opposite side . . . flourishing in his hand a drawn dagger and disappearing."

He describes the first lady weeping as he reached the box and the president's "general paralysis". The doctor thought he had been stabbed, until he came upon the "large firm clot of blood" at the back of his head. "The coagula I easily removed and passed the little finger of my left hand into the perfectly smooth opening," he wrote. "A slight oozing of blood followed and his breathing became more regular."

The president was carried to a house and covered with blankets, until at 7.20am a clergyman "supplicated to God on behalf of the bereaved family and our afflicted country".

Leale told his story in a letter to the congressional committee investigating the assassination in 1867 and spoke of it again four decades later, addressing crowds at the centenary of the president's birth.

"In the letter in 1867, he says he's drawing from an account that has not been published, that he wrote a few hours after the event," said Daniel Stowell, director of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln. A copy of the document, made by a clerk, was found late last month by Helena Iles Papaioannou, 31, a British researcher, who was searching through mail addressed to the surgeon-general.

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# Doctor's report on Lincoln assassination discovered by researcher



AP Photo/Library of Congress

Dr. Charles A. Leale was the first doctor to treat President Abraham Lincoln after he was shot at a Washington theater on the night of April 14, 1865. Helena Iles Papaioannou, a researcher with the Papers of Abraham Lincoln Project has discovered an original copy of Dr. Leale's clinical 21-page report from the night Lincoln was shot.

By Phil Rogers, NBCChicago.com

